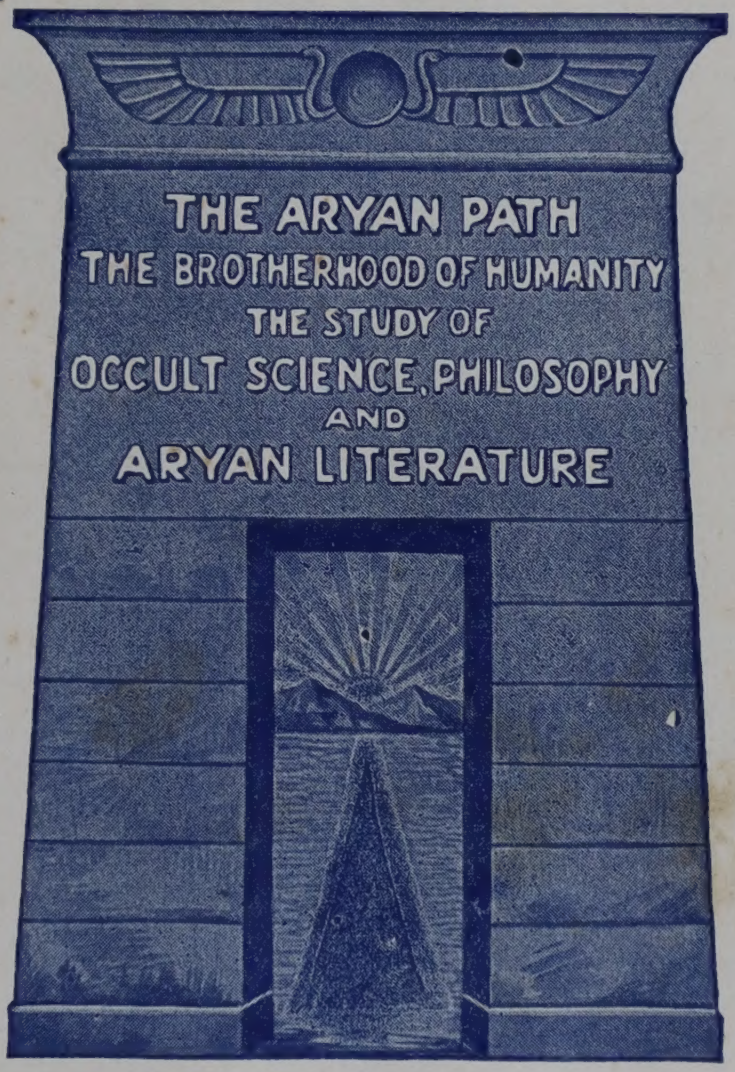
THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO



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Every aspiration of the soul for spiritual things, every resolve of the man to lead a purer life, every helping outstretched hand to a weaker brother, every desire for the truth, all hungering and thirsting after righteousness:—these and like yearnings and strivings of the soul have first of all come from above, from the Divine within.

—W. Q. Judge

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(c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

सत्यान्नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

There Is No Religion Higher Than Truth

BOMBAY, 17th September 1946. VOL. XVI. No. 11.

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AUM

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

BOMBAY, 17th September 1946. VOL. XVI. No. 11

FLIGHTS OF FANCY

We maintain that memory, as Olympiodorus called it, is simply *phantasy*, and the most unreliable thing in us.—H. P. B.

The phantasy is an impediment to our intellectual conceptions; and hence, when we are agitated by the inspiring influence of the Divinity, if the phantasy intervenes, the enthusiastic energy ceases: for enthusiasm and the ecstasy are contrary to each other. Should it be asked whether the soul is able to energize without the phantasy, we reply, that its perception of universals proves that it is able. It has perceptions, therefore, independent of the phantasy; at the same time, however, the phantasy attends in its energies, just as a storm pursues him who sails on the sea.—OLYMPIODORUS.

I am in the hearts of all men, and from me come memory, knowledge, and also the loss of both.—*Bhagavad-Gita*, xv. 15.

Memory is one of the major factors which sustain our illusions in the personal life and make difficult the overcoming of weaknesses and afflictions by the man of flesh.

This memory is akin to and dependent on fancy, which expresses itself in a variety of ways. "Full of shapes is fancy," says Shakespeare—from follies and day-dreaming (which is debilitating to healthy, *i. e.*, integrated, living) to the erecting of the prison-house of psychic images out of which its egotistic builder is not able to find release. This latter is known in Eastern Occultism as *Vikalpa-jāla*—a snare-like dilemma from which there is no escape.

We need not detain ourselves with the delectable variety of fancy indulged in by the awakening youthful Kama-Manas. The age of psychic puberty has its grave dangers and the fancy-infested desire-nature is one of them. For the ordinary mind there is wastage of the mental seminal power; but for the neophyte fancy is a dangerous vitiating force. He cannot afford to be weakened in the power of concentration which the habit of fancy brings about.

What type of memory, then, is a hindrance to the neophyte, against which he is warned? Not the memory which enables the personal man to remember the higher truths which the Sages have taught, but that memory which arises like a miasma from hurt feelings, damaged pride and injured *amour-propre* of the lower man. Often in cool, dry, delightful weather the bright sun draws out the reeking miasma from the earth. So with the earnest devotee. The man of earth emits a miasma under the benign influence of his spiritual sun. And such is the power of *maya* and of *moha*, illusion and delusion, that with his attention fixed on the miasma he forgets the very existence of the sun.

In the Book of Discipline named *The Voice of the Silence*, the neophyte is told:—

> Kill in thyself all memory of past experiences.
> Look not behind or thou art lost.

This is in reference to the lower personal memory. Nature, through the process of bodily death and of devachanic subjectivity, makes us loose the evil hold of personal memories of the past. The neophyte is called upon to do this con-

sciously and deliberately, with a view to learning to awaken the Higher Memory ; for Mr. Judge has stated that

> after all, the whole process of development is the process of getting back the memory of the past.

Robert Crosbie has explained that " this, however, cannot mean the sordid details of physical existence. " Then what ?

> A something larger, finer, greater—the memory of the divine Ego, and those functions of our real life which go on during sleep.

It is not to this Higher Memory that the words of *The Voice of the Silence* should be applied : " One single thought about the past that thou hast left behind, will drag thee down. " This Higher Memory is Reminiscence, which is not a " faculty or attribute of our physical memory, but an intuitional perception apart from and outside our physical brain, " writes H. P. B., and she calls it " the memory of the Soul."

The lower memory may be compared to the waste matter thrown out by the body in the processes of digestion and assimilation ; the higher memory, to the flesh and marrow manufactured by the body's constructive metabolism. The former is Kama-rupic ; the latter is the assimilated experience garnered and gathered by the Devachanee.

This Higher Memory cannot function in the personal man when he is busy with the lower memory called remembrance, and lives in it, revivifying mundane events and earthly experiences. As long as remembrance functions in the personal man his mind becomes of the shape, and becomes the mirror, of undesirable things. Real progress in soul life is not made and the results of spiritual exercises are nullified, if not totally, then to a very great extent, when mundane memory is allowed to intervene.

Mr. Judge's hint about getting back the memory of the past means activating reminiscence by concentrating the inner mind upon the Self. Says Shankara—" Cut thy bond stained with the stains of the world ; by strong effort make thy manhood fruitful. " How ? By centring all thought and imagination (*Chitta-Vratta*) in the Self.

Our modern life encourages the retention and reproduction of a multiplicity of useless and surely-recurring thoughts—memory of many objects, things, subjects, duties, persons, circumstances and affairs. Internal images claim the attention of the personal consciousness and stop it from ideating upon the world of the Real.

But there is something more : Not only is there a reproduction of past experiences but also a nefarious brooding over them, in which process fancy functions, translating the person to the most undesirable Kama-lokic state in waking consciousness itself. Phantoms are brought to birth ; phantasms ensue ; a phantasmagoria is the afflicted's sphere of existence ; for a time short or long he lives therein and, unless he puts a stop to recurring fancy, he must perish.

Patanjali mentions among the modifications of the mind both Memory and Fancy. While memory will not permit us to let go a remembrance, fancy brings forth notions devoid of any real basis. It conjures up old ghosts which create new spectres. Thick-coming fancies hold the neophyte to the plane of psychic delirium. Shankara advises that certain things should never be recalled, should be dislodged from the chambers of remembrance—" To remember as an object of desire the thing that has been vomited, brings contempt. "

The neophyte has to learn to take his mind off himself. The diffusive power which draws the mind to a hundred objects has to be focalized. An inner centre of life has to be created in the brain-mind and then transformed into a channel for the Spirit whose Light will flow through it and flood all his surroundings. This task of creating, out of the man of gross and dark desires, a man of refinement by utilizing the pressure of Karma, is akin to the pressure by which Nature transmutes coal into diamond. This has to be attempted and attained ere the diamond-soul can shed its light in the nether world.

Fancy and memory of that nether world are the neophyte's enemies. He must apply the instruction and learn to saturate himself with pure Alaya. He must forget about the thousand and one nights of fancy-ful living and fix his gaze upon the Dawn of the Everlasting Day in which the Spiritual Sun shines.

THE ROOTS OF RITUALISM IN CHURCH AND MASONRY

[This first instalment of an unfinished article by H. P. B. is reprinted from *Lucifer*, IV, pp. 32-44, March 1889.—EDS.]

I.

THEOSOPHISTS are very often, and very unjustly too, accused of infidelity and even of Atheism. This is a grave error, especially with regard to the latter charge.

In a large society, composed of so many races and nationalities, in an association wherein every man and woman is left to believe in whatever he or she likes, and to follow or not to follow—just as they please—the religion they were born and brought up in, there is but little room left for Atheism. As for "infidelity," it becomes a misnomer and a fallacy. To show how absurd is the charge, in any case, it is sufficient to ask our traducers to point out to us, in the whole civilized world, that person who is *not* regarded as an "infidel" by some other person belonging to some different creed. Whether one moves in highly respectable and orthodox circles, or in a so-called heterodox "society," it is all the same. It is a mutual accusation, tacitly, if not openly, expressed; a kind of a mental game at shuttlecock and battledore flung reciprocally, and in polite silence, at each other's heads. In sober reality, then, no theosophist, any more than a non-theosophist can be an infidel; while, on the other hand, there is no human being living who is not an infidel in the opinion of some sectarian or other. As to the charge of Atheism, it is quite another question.

What is *Atheism*, we ask, first of all? Is it disbelief in and denial of the existence of a God, or Gods, or simply the refusal to accept a personal deity on the somewhat gushy definition of R. Hall, who explains Atheism as "a ferocious system" because, "it leaves nothing *above* (?) us to excite awe, nor around us to awaken tenderness" (!) If the former, then most of our members—the hosts in India, Burmah, and elsewhere—would demur, as they believe in Gods and supernal beings, and are in great *awe* of some of them. Nor would a number of Western Theosophists fail to confess their full belief in Spirits, whether spatial or planetary, ghosts or angels. Many of us accept the existence of high and low Intelligences, and of Beings as great as any "personal" God. This is no occult secret. What we confessed to in the November *Lucifer* (editorial), we reiterate again. Most of us believe in the survival of the Spiritual Ego, in Planetary Spirits and *Nirmanakayas*, those great Adepts of the past ages, who, renouncing their right to Nirvana, remain in our spheres of being, not as "spirits" but as complete spiritual human Beings. Save their corporeal, visible envelope, which they leave behind, they remain as they were, in order to help poor humanity, as far as can be done without sinning against Karmic law. This is the "Great Renunciation" indeed; an incessant, conscious self-sacrifice throughout æons and ages till that day when the eyes of blind mankind will open and, instead of the few, *all* will see the universal truth. These Beings may well be regarded as God and Gods—if they would but allow the fire in our hearts, at the thought of that purest of all sacrifices, to be fanned into the flame of adoration, or the smallest altar in their honour. But they will not. Verily, "the secret heart is fair Devotion's (only) temple," and any other, in this case, would be no better than profane ostentation.

Now with regard to other invisible Beings, some of whom are still higher, and others far lower on the scale of divine evolution. To the latter we will have nothing to say; the former will have nothing to say to us: for we are as good as non-existent for them. The homogeneous can take no cognizance of the heterogeneous; and unless we learn to shuffle off our mortal coil and commune with them "spirit to spirit," we can hardly hope to recognize their true nature. Moreover, every true Theosophist holds that the divine HIGHER SELF of every mortal man is of the same essence as the essence of these Gods. Being, moreover, endowed with free-will, hence having, more than they, responsibility, we regard the incarnated Ego as far superior to, if not more divine than, any spiritual INTELLIGENCE *still awaiting incarnation*. Philosophically, the reason

for this is obvious, and every metaphysician of the Eastern school will understand it. The incarnated Ego has odds against it which do not exist in the case of a pure divine Essence unconnected with matter; the latter has no personal merit, whereas the former is on his way to final perfection through the trials of existence, of pain and suffering. The shadow of Karma does not fall upon that which is divine and unalloyed, and so different from us that no relation can exist between the two. As to those deities which are regarded in the Hindu esoteric Pantheon as finite and therefore under the sway of Karma, no true philosopher would ever worship them; they are signs and symbols.

Shall we then be regarded as atheists, only because while believing in Spiritual Hosts—those beings who have come to be worshipped in their collectivity as a *personal* God—we reject them absolutely as representing the ONE Unknown? and because we affirm that the eternal Principle, the ALL in ALL, of the *Absoluteness* of the *Totality*, cannot be expressed by limited words, nor be symbolized by anything with conditioned and qualificative attributes? Shall we, moreover, permit to pass without protest the charge against us of idolatry—by the Roman Catholics, of all men? They, whose religion is as pagan as any of the solar and element worshippers; whose creed was framed out for them, cut and dry, ages before the year 1 of Christian era; and whose dogmas and rites are the same as those of every *idolatrous* nation—if any such nation still exists in spirit anywhere at this day. Over the whole face of the earth, from the North to the South Pole, from the frozen gulfs of Northland to the torrid plains of Southern India, from Central America to Greece and Chaldea, the Solar Fire, as the symbol of divine Creative Power, of Life and Love, was worshipped. The union of the Sun (male element) with Earth and the Water (matter, the female element) was celebrated in the temples of the whole Universe. If Pagans had a feast commemorative of this union—which they celebrated nine months ere the Winter Solstice, when Isis was said to have conceived—so have the Roman Catholic Christians. The great and *holy day* of the *Annunciation*, the day on which the Virgin Mary "found favour with (her) God" and conceived "the Son of the *Highest*," is kept by Christians *nine months before Christmas*. Hence, the worship of the Fire, lights and lamps in the churches. Why? Because Vulcan, the fire-God, married Venus, the daughter of the Sea; that the Magi watched over the sacred fire in the East, and the Virgin-Vestals in the West. The Sun was the "Father"; Nature, the eternal Virgin-Mother: Osiris and Isis, Spirit-Matter, the latter worshipped under each of its three states by Pagan and Christian. Hence the Virgins—even in Japan—clothed with star-spangled blue, standing on the lunar crescent, as symbolical of female Nature (in her three elements of Air, Water, Earth); Fire or the male Sun, fecundating her yearly with his radiant beams (the "cloven tongues like as of fire" of the Holy Ghost).

In *Kalevala*, the oldest epic Poem of the Finns, of the pre-Christian antiquity of which there remains no doubt in the minds of scholars, we read of the gods of Finland, the gods of air and water, of fire and the forest, of Heaven and the Earth. In the superb translation by J. M. Crawford, in Rune L (Vol. II.) the reader will find the whole legend of the Virgin Mary in

> "*Mariatta*, child of beauty,
> Virgin-Mother of the Northland . . ." (p. 720).

Ukko, the great Spirit, whose abode is in Yûmäla, the sky or Heaven, chooses the Virgin Mariatta as his vehicle to incarnate through her in a Man-God. She becomes pregnant by plucking and eating a red berry (*marja*), when, repudiated by her parents, she gives birth to a "Son immortal," in *the manger of a stable*. Then the "Holy Babe" disappears, and Mariatta is in search of him. She asks a star, "the guiding star of Northland," where her "holy babe lies hidden," but the star answers her angrily:—

> "If I knew, I would not tell thee;
> 'Tis thy child that me created,
> In the cold to shine for ever. . . ."

and tells the Virgin nothing. Nor will the golden moon help her, because, Mariatta's babe having created her, left her in the great sky:—

> "Here to wander in the darkness,
> All alone at eve to wander,
> Shining for the good of others. . . ."

It is only the "Silver Sun" who, taking pity

upon the Virgin-Mother, tells her :—

> "Yonder is thy golden infant,
> There thy holy babe lies sleeping,
> Hidden to his belt in water,
> Hidden in the reeds and rushes."

She takes the holy baby home, and while the mother calls him "Flower,"

> "Others named him *Son of Sorrow*."

Is this a post-Christian legend? Not at all; for, as said, it is *essentially pagan in origin* and recognized as pre-Christian. Hence, with such data in hand in literature, the ever-recurring taunts of idolatry and atheism, of infidelity and paganism, ought to cease. The term *idolatry*, moreover, is of Christian origin. It was used by the early Nazarenes, during the 2½ centuries of our era, against those nations who used temples and churches, statues and images, because they, the early Christians themselves, *had neither temples, statues, nor images*, all of which they abhorred. Therefore the term "idolatrous" fits far better our accusers than ourselves, as this article will show. With Madonnas on every cross road, their thousands of statues, from Christs and Angels in every shape down to Popes and Saints, it is rather a dangerous thing for a Catholic to taunt any Hindu or Buddhist with idolatry. The assertion has now to be proved.

II.

We may begin by the origin of the word God. What is the real and primitive meaning of the term? Its meanings and etymologies are as many as they are various. One of them shows the word derived from an old Persian and mystic term *goda*. It means "itself," or something self-emanating from the absolute Principle. The root word was *godan*—whence Wodan, Woden, and Odin, the Oriental radical having been left almost unaltered by the Germanic races. Thus they made of it *gott*, from which the objective *gut*—"good," as also the term *gotz*, or idol, were derived. In ancient Greece, the word Zeus and *Theos* led to the Latin *Deus*. This *goda*, the emanation, is not, and cannot be, identical with that from which it radiates, and is, therefore, but a periodical, finite manifestation. Old Aratus, who wrote "full of Zeus are all the streets and the markets of man; full of Him is the sea and the harbours," did not limit his deity to such a temporary reflection on our terrestrial plane as Zeus, or even its antetype—Dyaus, but meant, indeed, the universal omnipresent Principle. Before the radiant god *Dyaus* (the sky) attracted the notice of man, there was the Vedic *Tad* ("that") which, to the Initiate and philosopher, would have no definite name, and which was the absolute Darkness that underlies every manifested radiancy. No more than the mythical Jupiter—the later reflection of Zeus—could Sûrya, the Sun, the first manifestation in the world of Maya and the Son of Dyaus, fail to be termed "Father" by the ignorant. Thus the Sun became very soon interchangeable and one with Dyaus; for some, the "Son," for others, the "Father" in the radiant sky; *Dyaus-Pitar*, the Father in the Son, and the Son in the Father, truly shows, however, his finite origin by having the Earth assigned to him as a wife. It is during the full decadence of metaphysical philosophy that *Dyâva-prithivi* "Heaven and Earth" began to be represented as the Universal cosmic parents, not alone of men, but of the gods also. From the original conception, abstract and poetical, the ideal cause fell into grossness. Dyaus, the sky, became very soon Dyaus or Heaven, the abode of the "Father," and finally, indeed, that Father himself. Then the Sun, upon being made the symbol of the latter, received the title of *Dina-Kara* "day-maker," of *Bhaskara* "light-maker," now the Father of his Son, and *vice versa*. The reign of ritualism and of anthropomorphic cults was henceforth established and finally degraded the whole world, retaining supremacy to the present civilized age.

Such being the common origin, we have but to contrast the two deities—the god of the Gentiles and the god of the Jews—on their own revealed WORD; and judging them on their respective definitions of themselves, conclude intuitively which is the nearest to the grandest ideal. We quote Colonel Ingersoll, who brings Jehovah and Brahma parallel with each other. The former, "from the clouds and darkness of Sinai," said to the Jews :—

> "'Thou shalt have no other gods before me... Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them; for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, *visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them* that hate me.' Con-

trast this with the words put by the Hindu into the mouth of Brahm: 'I am the same to all mankind. They who honestly serve other gods, involuntarily worship me. I am he who partaketh of all worship, and I am the reward of all worshippers.' Compare these passages. The first, a dungeon where crawl the things begot of jealous slime; the other, great as the domed firmament inlaid with suns . . . ."

The "first" is the god who haunted Calvin's fancy, when he added to his doctrine of predestination that of Hell being paved with the skulls of *unbaptized* infants. The beliefs and dogmas of our churches are far more blasphemous in the ideas they imply than those of the *benighted* Heathen. The *amours* of Brahmâ, under the form of a buck, with his own daughter, as a deer, or of Jupiter with Leda, under that of a swan, are grand *allegories*. They were never given out as a *revelation*, but known to have been the products of the poetic fancy of Hesiod and other mythologists. Can we say as much of the *immaculate daughters* of the god of the Roman Catholic Church—Anna and Mary? Yet, even to breathe that the Gospel narratives are allegories too, as they would be most sacrilegious were they accepted in their dead letter, constitutes in a Christian born the *acme* of blasphemy!

Verily, they may whitewash and mask as much as they like the god of Abraham and Isaac, they shall never be able to disprove the assertion of Marcion, who denied that the God of *Hate* could be the same as the "Father of Jesus." Heresy or not, but the "Father in Heaven" of the Churches remained since then a hybrid creature; a mixture between the Jove of the Pagan mobs and the "jealous God" of Moses, exoterically the SUN, whose abode is in Heaven, or the sky, esoterically. Does he not give birth to LIGHT "that shineth in Darkness," to the Day, the bright Dyaus, the Son and is he not the MOST HIGH—*Deus Cœlum?* And is it not again *Terra*, the "Earth," the ever-immaculate as the ever-prolific Virgin who, fecundated by the ardent embraces of her "Lord"—the fructifying rays of the Sun, becomes, in this terrestrial sphere, the mother of all that lives and breathes on her vast bosom? Hence, the sacredness of her products in Ritualism—the *bread* and the *wine*. Hence also, the ancient *messis*, the great sacrifice to the goddess of harvest (*Ceres Eleusina*, the Earth again): messis, for the Initiates, *missa* for the profane,[1] now transformed into the Christian mass or liturgy. The ancient oblation of the fruits of the Earth to the Sun, the *Deus Altissimus*, "the Most High," the symbol of the G.A.O.T.U. of the Masons to this day, became the foundation of the most important ritual among the ceremonies of the new religion. The worship offered to Osiris-Isis (the Sun and the Earth),[2] to Bel and the cruciform Astarte of the Babylonians; to Odin or Thor and Friga, of the Scandinavians; to Belen and the *Virgo Paritura* of the Celts; to Apollo and the *Magna Mater* of the Greeks; all these couples having the same meaning, passed bodily to, and were transformed by, the Christians into the Lord God or the Holy Ghost descending upon the Virgin Mary.

Deus Sol or *Solus*, the Father, was made interchangeable with the Son: the "Father" in his noon glory, he became the "Son" at Sunrise, when he was said to "be born." This idea received its full apotheosis annually on December the 25th, during the Vernal Solstice, when the Sun—hence the solar gods of all the nations—was said to be born. *Natalis solis invicte.* And the "precursor" of the resurrecting Sun *grows*, and *waxes strong*, until the vernal equinox, when the god Sol begins its annual course, under the sign of the Ram or the *Lamb*, the first lunar week of the month. The 1st of March was feasted throughout all pagan Greece, as its *neomenia* was sacred to Diana. Christian nations celebrate their Easter, for the same reason, on the first Sunday that follows the full-moon, at the Vernal Equinox. With the festivals of the Pagans, the canonicals of their priests and Hierophants were copied by Christendom. Will this be denied? In his "Life of Constantine" Eusebius confesses—thus saying, perhaps, the only truth he ever uttered in his life—that "in order to render Christianity *more attractive to the Gentiles, the priests* (of Christ)

[1] From *pro*, "before," and *fanum*, "the temple," *i.e.*, the non-initiates who stood before the fane, but dared not enter it.—(*Vide* the Works of Ragon.)

[2] The Earth, and the Moon, its parent, are interchangeable. Thus all the lunar goddesses were also the representative symbols of the Earth.—*Vide Secret Doctrine, Symbolism.*

adopted the exterior vestments and ornaments used in the pagan cult." He might have added "their rituals" and dogmas also.

III.

It is a matter of History—however unreliable the latter—for a number of facts preserved by ancient writers corroborate it, that Church Ritualism and Freemasonry have sprung from the same source, and developed hand in hand. But as Masonry, even with its errors and later innovations, was far nearer the truth than the Church, the latter began very soon her persecutions against it. Masonry was, in its origin, simply archaic Gnosticism, or early esoteric Christianity; Church Ritualism was, and *is, exoteric paganism,* pure and simple—*remodelled,* we do not say *reformed.* Read the works of Ragon, a Mason who forgot more than the Masons of to-day know. Study, collating them together, the casual but numerous statements made by Greek and Latin writers, many of whom were Initiates, most learned Neophytes and partakers of the Mysteries. Read finally the elaborate and venomous slanders of the Church Fathers against the Gnostics, the Mysteries and their Initiates—and you may end by unravelling the truth. It is a few philosophers who, driven by the political events of the day, tracked and persecuted by the fanatical Bishops of early Christianity—who had yet neither fixed ritual nor dogmas nor Church—it is these Pagans who founded the latter. Blending most ingeniously the truths of the Wisdom-religion with the exoteric fictions so dear to the ignorant mobs, it is they who laid the first foundations of ritualistic Churches and of the Lodges of modern Masonry. The latter fact was demonstrated by Ragon in his ANTE-OMNIÆ of the modern Liturgy compared with the ancient Mysteries, and showing the rituals conducted by the early Masons; the former may be ascertained by a like comparison of the Church canonicals, the sacred vessels, and the festivals of the Latin and other Churches, with those of the pagan nations. But Churches and Masonry have widely diverged since the days when both were one. If asked how a profane can know it, the answer comes: ancient and modern Freemasonry are an obligatory study with every Eastern Occultist.

Masonry, its paraphernalia and modern innovations (the Biblical Spirit in it especially) notwithstanding, does good both on the moral and physical planes—or did so, hardly ten years ago, at any rate.[1] It was a true *ecclesia* in the sense of fraternal union and mutual help, the only *religion* in the world, if we regard the term as derived from the word *religare,* "to bind" together, as it made all men belonging to it "brothers"—regardless of *race* and *faith.* Whether with the enormous wealth at its command it could not do far more than it does now, is no business of ours. We see no visible, crying evil from this institution, and no one yet, save the Roman Church, has ever been found to show that it did any harm. Can *Church* Christianity say as much? Let ecclesiastical and profane history answer the question. For one, it has divided the whole mankind into Cains and Abels; it has slaughtered millions in the name of her God—the Lord of *Hosts,* truly, the ferocious Jehovah Sabbaoth—and instead of giving an impetus to civilization, the favourite boast of her followers—it has retarded it during the long and weary Mediæval ages. It is only under the relentless assaults of science and the revolt of men trying to free themselves, that it began to lose ground and could no longer arrest enlightenment. Yet has it not softened, as claimed, the "barbarous spirit of Heathendom"? We say no, most emphatically. It is Churchianity with its *odium theologicum,* since it could no longer repress human progress, which infused its lethal spirit of intolerance, its ferocious selfishness, greediness, and cruelty into modern civilization under the mask of *cant* and meek Christianity. When were the Pagan Cæsars more bloodthirsty or more coolly cruel than are the modern Potentates and their armies? When did the millions of the Proletariat starve as they do now? When has mankind shed more tears and suffered than at present?

Yes; there was a day when the Church and Masonry were one. These were centuries of intense

[1] Since the origin of Masonry, the split between the British and American Masons and the French "Grand Orient" of the "Widow's Sons" is the first one that has ever occurred. It bids fair to make of these two sections of Masonry a Masonic Protestant and a Roman Catholic Church, as far as regards ritualism and brotherly love, at all events.

moral reaction, a transitional period of thought as heavy as a nightmare, an age of strife. Thus, when the creation of new ideals led to the apparent pulling down of the old fanes and the destruction of old idols, it ended in reality with the rebuilding of those temples out of the old materials, and the erection of the same idols under new names. It was a universal rearrangement and whitewashing—but only skin deep. History will never be able to tell us—but tradition and judicious research do—how many semi-Hierophants and even high Initiates were forced to become renegades in order to ensure the survival of the secrets of Initiation. Prætextatus, pro-consul at Achaia, is credited with remarking in the IVth century of our era, that "to deprive the Greeks of the sacred mysteries *which bind together the whole mankind* was equivalent to depriving them of their life." The Initiates took perhaps the hint, and thus joining *nolens volens* the followers of the new faith, then becoming all domineering, acted accordingly. Some hellenized Jewish Gnostics did the same; and thus more than one "Clemens Alexandrinus" —a convert to all appearance, an ardent Neo-Platonist and the same philosophical *pagan* at heart—became the instructor of ignorant Christian Bishops. In short the convert *malgré lui* blended the two external mythologies, the old and the new, and while giving out the compound to the masses, kept the sacred truths for himself.

The kind of Christians they made may be inferred from the example of Synesius, the Neo-Platonist. What scholar is ignorant of the fact, or would presume to deny, that the favourite and devoted pupil of Hypatia—the virgin-philosopher, the martyr and victim of the infamous Cyril of Alexandria—had not even been baptised when first offered by the bishops of Egypt the Episcopalian See of the Ptolemaïd? Every student is aware that, when finally baptised, after having accepted the office proffered, it was so *skin-deep* that he actually signed his consent only after his conditions had been complied with and his future privileges guaranteed. What the chief clause was, is curious. It was a *sine quâ non* condition that he was to be allowed to abstain from professing the (Christian) doctrines, that he, the new Bishop, did not believe in! Thus, although baptised and ordained in the degrees of deaconship, priesthood, and episcopate, he never separated himself from his wife, never gave up his Platonic philosophy, nor even his sport so strictly forbidden to every other bishop. This occurred as late as the Vth century.

Such transactions between initiated philosophers and ignorant priests of reformed Judaism were numerous in those days. The former sought to save their "mystery-vows" and personal dignity, and to do so they had to resort to a much-to-be-regretted compromise with ambition, ignorance, and the rising wave of popular fanaticism. They believed in Divine Unity, the ONE or *Solus*, unconditioned and unknowable; and still they consented to render public homage and pay reverence to *Sol*, the Sun moving among his twelve apostles, the 12 signs of the Zodiac, *alias* the 12 Sons of Jacob. The *hoi polloi* remaining ignorant of the former, worshipped the latter, and in them, their old time-honoured gods. To transfer that worship from the solar-lunar and other cosmic deities to the Thrones, Archangels, Dominions, and Saints was no difficult matter; the more so since the said sidereal dignities were received into the new Christian Canon with their old names almost unchanged. Thus, while, during Mass, the "Grand Elect" reiterated, under his breath, his absolute adherence to the Supreme Universal Unity of the "incomprehensible Workman," and pronounced in solemn and loud tones the "Sacred Word" (now substituted by the Masonic "Word at low breath"), his assistant proceeded with the chanting of the *Kyriel* of names of those inferior sidereal beings whom the masses were made to worship. To the profane catechumen, indeed, who had offered prayers but a few months or weeks before to the Bull Apis and the holy Cynocephalus, to the sacred ibis and the hawk-headed Osiris, St. John's eagle[1] and the

[1] It is an error to say that John the Evangelist became the patron Saint of Masonry only after the XVIth century, and it implies a double mistake. Between John the "Divine," the "Seer" and the writer of *Revelation*, and John the Evangelist who is now shown in company of the Eagle, there is a great difference, as the latter John is a creation of Irenæus, along with the fourth gospel. Both were the result of the quarrel of the Bishop of Lyons with the Gnostics, and no one will ever tell what was the real

divine Dove (witness of the Baptism while hovering over the Lamb of God), must have appeared as the most natural development and sequence to his own national and sacred zoology, which he had been taught to worship since the day of his birth.

IV.

It may thus be shown that both modern Freemasonry and Church ritualism descend in direct line from initiated Gnostics, Neo-Platonists, and renegade Hierophants of the Pagan Mysteries, the secrets of which they have lost, but which have been nevertheless preserved by those who would not compromise. If both Church and Masons are willing to forget the history of their true origin, the theosophists are not. They repeat: Masonry and the three great Christian religions are all inherited goods. The "ceremonies and passwords" of the former, and the prayers, dogmas, and rites of the latter, are travestied copies of pure Paganism (copied and borrowed as diligently by the Jews), and of Neo-Platonic theosophy. Also, that the "passwords" used even now by Biblical Masons and connected with "the tribe of Judah," "Tubal-Cain," and other Zodiacal dignitaries of the Old Testament, are the Jewish *aliases* of the ancient gods of the heathen *mobs*, not of the gods of the Hierogrammatists, the interpreters of the *true* mysteries. That which follows proves it well. The good Masonic Brethren could hardly deny that in name they are *Solicoles* indeed, the worshippers of the Sun in heaven, in whom the erudite Ragon saw such a magnificent symbol of the G. A. O. T. U.—which it surely is. Only the trouble he had was to prove —which no one can—that the said G. A. O. T. U. was not rather the *Sol* of the small exoteric fry of the *Pro-fanes* than the *Solus* of the High *Epoptai*. For the secret of the fires of SOLUS, the spirit of which radiates in the "Blazing Star," is a Hermetic secret which, unless a Mason studies *true* theosophy, is lost to him for ever. He has ceased to understand now, even the little indiscretions of Tshuddi. To this day Masons and Christians keep the Sabbath sacred, and call it the "Lord's" day; yet they know as well as any that both *Sunday*, and the *Sonntag* of Protestant England and Germany, mean the Sun-day or the *day of the Sun*, as it meant 2,000 years ago.

And you, Reverend and good Fathers, Priests, Clergymen, and Bishops, you who so charitably call theosophy "idolatry" and doom its adherents openly and privately to eternal perdition, can you boast of one single rite, vestment, or sacred vessel in church or temple that does not come to you from paganism? Nay, to assert it would be too dangerous, in view, not only of history, but also of the confessions of your own priestly craft.

Let us recapitulate, if only to justify our assertions.

"Roman sacrificators had to confess before sacrificing," writes du Choul. The priests of Jupiter donned a tall, square, black cap (*Vide* Armenian and Greek modern priests), the head dress of the *Flamines*. The black *soutane* of the Roman Catholic priest is the black *hierocoraces*, the loose robe of the Mithraic priests, so-called from being *raven* coloured (raven, *corax*). The King-Priest of Babylon had a golden seal-ring and slippers kissed by the conquered potentates, a white mantle, a tiara of gold, to which two bandelets were suspended. The popes have the seal-ring and the slippers for the same use; a white satin mantle bordered with golden stars, a tiara with two bejewelled bandelets suspended to it, etc., etc. The white linen *alb* (*alba vestis*) is the garment of the priests of *Isis;* the top of the heads of the priests of Anubis was shaven (*Juvenal*), hence the tonsure; the *chasuble* of the Christian "*Father*" is the copy from the upper garment of the Phœnician priest-sacrificers, a garment called *calasiris*, tied at the neck and descending to their *heels*. The *stole* comes to our

name of the writer of the grandest of the Evangels. But what we do know is, that the Eagle is the legal property of John, the author of the *Apocalypsis*, written originally centuries B. C., and only *re-edited*, before receiving canonical hospitality. This John, or *Oannes*, was the accepted patron of all the Egyptian and Greek Gnostics (who were the early Builders or *Masons* of "Solomon's Temple," as, earlier, of the Pyramids) from the beginning of time. The *Eagle* was his attribute—the most archaic of symbols—being the Egyptian *Ah*, the bird of Zeus, and sacred to the Sun with every ancient people. Even the Jews adopted it among the Initiated Kabalists, as "the symbol of the Sephirah Tiph-e-reth, the spiritual æther or air," says Mr. Myer's "*Qabbalah.*" With the Druids the eagle was the symbol of the Supreme Deity, and again a portion of the Cherubic symbol. Adopted by the pre-Christian Gnostics, it could be seen at the foot of the *Tau* in Egypt, before it was placed in the Rose-Croix degree at the foot of the Christian cross. Pre-eminently the bird of the Sun, the Eagle is necessarily connected with every solar god, and is the symbol of every seer who looks into the astral light, and sees in it the shadows of the Past, Present, and Future, as easily as the Eagle looks at the Sun.

priests from the female garment worn by the *Galli*, the male—*Nautches* of the temple, whose office was that of the Jewish *Kadashim*; (*Vide* II. Kings, xxiii. 7, for the true word) their *belt of purity* (?) from the *ephod* of the Jews, and the *Isiac* cord; the priests of Isis being vowed to chastity. (*Vide* Ragon, for details.)

The ancient pagans used *holy* water or lustrations to purify their cities, fields, temples, and men, just as it is being done now in Roman Catholic countries. Fonts stood at the door of every temple, full of lustral water and called *favisses* and *aquiminaria*. Before sacrificing, the pontiff or the *curion* (whence the French *curé*), dipping a laurel branch into the lustral water, sprinkled with it the pious congregation assembled, and that which was then termed *lustrica* and *aspergilium* is now called sprinkler (or *goupillon*, in French.) The latter was with the priestesses of Mithra the symbol of the Universal *lingam*. Dipped during the Mysteries in lustral milk, the faithful were sprinkled with it. It was the emblem of Universal fecundity; hence the use of the holy water in Christianity, a rite of phallic origin. More than this; the idea underlying it is purely occult and belongs to ceremonial magic. Lustrations were performed by fire, sulphur, air, and water. To draw the attention of the celestial gods, *ablutions* were resorted to; to conjure the nether gods away, *aspersion* was used.

The vaulted ceilings of cathedrals and churches, Greek or Latin, are often painted blue and studded with golden stars, to represent the canopy of the heavens. This is copied from the Egyptian temples, where solar and star worship was performed. Again, the same reverence is paid in Christian and Masonic architecture to the Orient (or the Eastern point) as in the days of Paganism. Ragon described it fully in his destroyed volumes. The *princeps porta*, the door of the World, and of the "King of Glory," by whom was meant at first the Sun, and now his human symbol, the Christ, is the door of the Orient, and faces the East in every church and temple.[1] It is through this "door of life"—the solemn pathway, through which the daily entrance of the luminary into the *oblong square*[2] of the earth or the Tabernacle of the Sun is effected every morning—that the "newly born" babe is ushered, and carried to the baptismal font; and it is to the left of this edifice (the gloomy north whither start the "apprentices," and where the candidates got their *trial by water*) that now the fonts, and in the days of old the wells (*piscinas*) of lustral waters, were placed in the ancient churches, which had been pagan fanes. The altars of heathen Lutetia were buried, and found again under the choir of *Notre-Dame* of Paris, its ancient lustral wells existing to this day in the said Church. Almost every great ancient Church on the Continent that antedates the Middle Ages was once a pagan temple in virtue of the orders issued by the Bishops and Popes of Rome. Gregory the Great (Platine *en sa Vie*) commands the monk Augustine, his missionary in England, in this wise: "Destroy the idols, never the temples! Sprinkle them with holy water, place in them relics, and let the nations worship in the places they are accustomed to." We have but to turn to the works of Cardinal Baronius, to find in the year XXXVIth of his *Annals* his confession. The Holy Church, he says, was *permitted to appropriate the rites and ceremonies used by the pagans in their idolatrous cult*, since she (the Church) *expiated them by her consecration!* In the *Antiquités Gauloises* (Book II. Ch. 19) by Fauchet, we read that the Bishops of France adopted and *used the pagan ceremonies in order to convert followers to Christ.*

This was when Gaul was still a pagan country. Are the same rites and ceremonies used now in Christian France, and other Roman Catholic countries, still going on in grateful remembrance of the pagans and their gods?

V.

Up to the IVth century the churches knew of no altars. Up to that date the altar was a *table*

[1] Except, perhaps, the temples and chapels of dissident Protestants, which are built anywhere, and used for more than one purpose. In America I know of chapels hired for fairs and shows, and even theatres; to-day a chapel, the day after sold for debts, and fitted for a gin shop or a public-house. I speak of chapels, of course, not of Churches and Cathedrals.

[2] A Masonic term; a symbol of the Arks of Noah, and of the Covenant, of the Temple of Solomon, the Tabernacle, and the Camp of the Israelites, all built as "oblong squares." Mercury and Apollo were represented by oblong cubes and squares, and so is Kaaba, the great temple at Mecca.

raised in the middle of the temple, for purposes of *Communion*, or fraternal repasts (the *Cœna*, as mass was originally said in the evening). In the same way now the table is raised in the "Lodge" for Masonic Banquets, which usually close the proceedings of a Lodge, and at which the resurrected Hiram Abifs, the "Widow's Sons," honour their toasts by *firing*—a Masonic mode of transubstantiation. Shall we call their banquet tables *altars*, also? Why not? The altars were copies from the *ara maxima* of pagan Rome. The Latins placed square and oblong stones near their tombs, and called them *ara*, altar; they were consecrated to the gods *Lares* and *Manes*. Our altars are a derivation from these square stones, another form of the boundary stones known as the gods *Termini* —the Hermeses, and the Mercuries, whence *Mercurius quadratus, quadriceps, quadrifrons*, etc., etc., the *four-faced* gods, whose symbols these square stones were, from the highest antiquity. The stone on which the ancient kings of Ireland were crowned was such an "altar." Such a stone is in Westminster Abbey, endowed, moreover, with a voice. Thus our altars and thrones descend directly from the priapic boundary stones of the pagans—the gods *termini*.

Shall the church-going reader feel very indignant if he is told that the Christians adopted the *pagan* way of worshipping *in a temple*, only during the reign of Diocletianus? Up to that period they had an insurmountable horror for altars and temples, and held them in abomination for the first 250 years of our era. These primitive Christians were Christians indeed; the moderns are more pagan than any ancient idolators. The former were the *Theosophists* of those days; from the IVth century they became Helleno-Judaic Gentiles *minus* the philosophy of the Neo-Platonists. Read what Minutius Felix says in the IIIrd century to the Romans:—

> "You fancy that we (Christians) conceal that which we worship because *we will have neither temples nor altars?* But what image of God shall we raise, since Man is himself God's image? What temple can we build to the Deity, when the Universe, which is Its work, can hardly contain It? How shall we enthrone the power of such Omnipotence in a single building? Is it not far better to consecrate to the Deity a temple in our heart and spirit?"

But then the *Chres*tians of the type of Minutius Felix had in their mind the commandment of the MASTER-INITIATE, *not to pray in the synagogues and temples* as the hypocrites do, "that they may be seen of men." (Matthew vi., 5). They remembered the declaration of Paul, the Apostle-Initiate, the "Master Builder" (1 Corinthians iii, 10), that MAN was the one temple of God, in which the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God, dwelleth (*Ibid.*) They obeyed the truly Christian precepts, whereas the modern Christians obey but the arbitrary canons of their respective churches, and the rules of their Elders. "Theosophists are notorious Atheists," exclaims a writer in the "Church Chronicle." "Not one of them is ever known to attend divine service . . . . the Church is obnoxious to them"; and forthwith uncorking the vials of his wrath, he pours out their contents on the *infidel, heathen* F. T. S. The modern Churchman stones the Theosophist as his ancient forefather, the Pharisee of the "Synagogue of the Libertines" (*Acts* vi., 9), stoned Stephen, for saying that which even many Christian Theosophists say, namely that "the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (*Ibid.* 48); and they "suborn men" just as these iniquitous judges did (*Ibid.* 11) to testify against us.

Forsooth, friends, you are indeed the righteous descendants of your predecessors, whether of the colleagues of Saul, or of those of Pope Leo X., the cynical author of the ever famous sentence: "How useful to us this *fable* of Christ," "*Quantum nobis prodest hac fabula Christi!*"

VI.

The "Solar Myth" theory has become in our day stale—*ad nauseam*—repeated as we hear it from the four cardinal points of Orientalism and Symbolism, and applied indiscriminately to all things and all religions, except Church Christianity and state-religion. No doubt the Sun was throughout the whole of antiquity and since days immemorial the symbol of the Creative Deity—with every nation, not with the Parsis alone; but so he is with the Ritualists. As in days of old, so it is now. Our central star is the "Father" for the *pro-fanes*, the Son of the ever unknowable Deity for the *Epoptai*. Says the same Mason, Ragon, "the Sun was the most sublime and

natural image of the GREAT ARCHITECT, as the most ingenious of all the allegories under which the moral and good man (the *true sage*) had ever endowed infinite and limitless *Intelligence.*" Apart from the latter assumption, Ragon is right; for he shows this symbol gradually receding from the ideal so represented and conceived, and becoming finally from a symbol the original, in the minds of his ignorant worshippers. Then the great Masonic author proves that it is the *physical* Sun which was regarded as both the Father and the Son by the early Christians.

> "Oh, initiated Brethren," he exclaims. "Can you forget that in the temples of the existing religion a large *lamp* burns night and day? It is suspended in front of the chief altar, the depository of the ark of the Sun. Another *lamp* burning before the altar of the virgin-mother is the emblem of the light of the *moon*. Clemens Alexandrinus tells us that the Egyptians were the first to establish the religious use of the lamps . . . . Who does not know that the most sacred and terrible duty was entrusted to the Vestals? If the Masonic temples are lighted with three astral lights, the *sun*, the *moon*, and the *geometrical star*, and with three vital lights, this Hierophant and his two *Episcopes* (Wardens, in French *Surveillants*), it is because one of the Fathers of Masonry, the learned Pythagoras, ingenuously suggests that we should not speak of divine things without a light. Pagans celebrated a festival of lamps called *Lampadophorics*, in honour of Minerva, Prometheus, and Vulcan. But Lactantius and some of the earliest fathers of the new Faith complained bitterly of this pagan introduction of lamps in the Churches, 'If they deigned,' writes Lactantius, '*to contemplate that light which we call the* SUN, they would soon recognise that *God has no need of their lamps.*' And Vigilantius adds: 'Under the pretext of religion the Church established a Gentile custom of lighting vile candles, while the SUN is there illuminating us with a thousand lights. *Is it not a great honour* for the LAMB OF GOD (the sun thus represented), *which placed in the middle of the throne* (the Universe) *fills it with the radiance of his Majesty?*' Such passages prove to us that in those days the primitive *Church worshipped* THE GREAT ARCHITECT OF THE WORLD in its image the SUN, sole of its kind (*The Mass and Its Mysteries*, pp. 19 and 20.)

Indeed, while Christian candidates have to pronounce the Masonic oath turned to the East and that their "Venerable" keeps in the Eastern corner, because the Neophytes were made to do the same during the Pagan Mysteries, the Church has, in her turn, preserved the identical rite. During the High Mass, the High-Altar (*ara maxima*) is ornamented with the Tabernacle; or the pyx (the box in which the Host is kept), and with six lighted tapers. The esoteric meaning of the pyx and contents—the symbol of the Christ-Sun—is that it represents the resplendent luminary, and the six tapers the six planets (the early Christians knowing of no more), three on his right and three on his left. This is a copy of the seven-branched candlestick of the synagogue, which has an identical meaning. "*Sol est Dominus Meus*" "the Sun is my Lord!" exclaims David in Psalm xcv. translated very ingeniously in the authorized version by "The Lord is a great God," "a great King *above* all Gods" (v. 3), or planets truly! Augustin Chalis is more sincere in his *Philosophie des Religions Comparées* (Vol. II., p. 18), when he writes:

> "All are devs (demons), on this Earth, save the God of the Seers (Initiates) the sublime IAO; and *if in Christ you see aught than* the SUN, then you adore a *dev*, a phantom such as are all the children of night."

The East being the Cardinal point whence arises the luminary of the Day, the great giver and sustainer of life, the creator of all that lives and breathes on this globe, what wonder if all the nations of the Earth worshipped in him the visible agent of the invisible Principle and Cause; and that *mass* should be said in the honour of him who is the giver of *messis* or "harvest." But, between worshipping the ideal as a *whole*, and the physical symbol, a part chosen to represent that whole and the ALL, there is an abyss. For the learned Egyptian, the Sun was the "eye" of Osiris, not Osiris himself; the same for the learned Zoroastrians. For the early Christians the Sun became *the* Deity, *in toto*; and by dint of casuistics, sophistry, and dogmas not to be questioned, the modern Christian churches have contrived to force even the educated world to accept the same, while hypnotising it into a belief that *their* god is the one living true Deity, the maker of, *not the Sun*—a demon worshipped by the "heathen." But what may be the difference between a wicked demon, and the anthropomorphic God, *e. g.*, as represented in Solomon's Proverbs? That "God," unless poor, helpless, ignorant men call upon him, when their "fear cometh as desolation" and their "destruction as a whirlwind," threatens them in

such words as these: "I will *laugh* at your calamities, I will *mock* when your fear cometh!" (Prov. i., 27.) Identify this God with the great Avatar on whom the Christian legend is hung; make him one with that true Initiate who said, "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted": and what is the result? Such identification alone is quite sufficient to justify the fiendish joy of Tertullian, who laughed and rejoiced at the idea of his *infidel* next of kin roasting in hell-fire; the advice of Hieronymus to the Christian convert to trample over the body of his pagan mother, if she seeks to prevent him *leaving her for ever* to follow Christ; and it makes of all the Church tyrants, murderers, and *omnes gentes* of the Inquisition, the grandest and noblest exemplars of *practical* Christianity that have ever lived!

H. P. B.

[*To Be Continued*]

WHAT THE MASTERS HAVE SAID

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In 1888, speaking of Col. Olcott, an article in this magazine quoted from letters from the Adepts sent to Mr. Sinnett at a time some objections were made to the work of the Society on the ground that enough attention was not paid to men of science and to science itself.* Since the year in which those letters were written many persons have joined the Theosophical Society and its sphere of work has greatly extended. And now no less than then, the workers have begun to pay too much attention to the intellectual side of Theosophy and too little to that phase on which the Masters who are behind insist and which is called by H. P. B. in *The Voice of the Silence* the "heart doctrine." Others also have said that they do not want any of the heart doctrine, but wish us to be highly respectable and scientific. Let us consult the Masters, those of us who believe in them.

When the letters to the Simla Lodge were written it was said by objecting Theosophists that it was time now to take a different tack and to work for men of science, and there was a slight suspicion of a repulsion between the Hindus, who are black, and the Europeans, as well as an openly expressed condemnation of the methods of Col. Olcott and H. P. Blavatsky. The reply from the Adepts, made after consultation with others very much higher still, runs in part:

> No messenger of truth, no prophet, has ever achieved during his lifetime a complete triumph—not even Buddha. The Theosophical Society was chosen as the corner-stone, the foundation of the future religion of humanity. To achieve the proposed object a greater, wider, and especially a more benevolent intermingling of the high and the low, of the alpha and omega of society was determined on.

Who determined this? The Adepts and those who are yet still behind them, that is to say, for the Theosophist, the Dhyan Chohans who have control of such matters. Why was it decided? Because the world is sunk in sorrow and in selfishness which keeps the one side of society from helping the other. The letter goes on:

> The white race must be the first to stretch out the hand of fellowship to the dark nations. This prospect may not smile to all alike. He is no Theosophist who objects to the principle...and it is we, the humble disciples of the perfect Lamas, who are expected to allow the Theosophical Society to drop its noblest title, *The Brotherhood of Humanity*, to become a simple school of philosophy. Let us understand each other. He who does not feel competent enough to grasp the noble idea sufficiently to work for it need not undertake a task too heavy for him.

The depth of the sarcasm here cannot be measured, and at the same time it is almost impossible to fully understand the opportunity pointed out in those words and the loss of progress one may suffer by not heeding them. They apply to all, and not merely to the persons they were written to, for the Masters always say what applies universally. The letter continues:

> But there is hardly a Theosophist in the whole Society unable to effectually help it by correcting the erroneous impression of outsiders, if not by actually himself propagating this idea.

Later on, near the time when H. P. B. was in Germany, others came and asked what they might do, how they might work, and what "sphere of influence" they might find. The Master known as K. H. then wrote a letter to one, and at the

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* *Path*, vol. iii, p. 12.

same time sent copies with fuller notes on the communication to others. A part of that letter has lately been published in the German magazine, the *Sphinx*. In it the Master said among other things:

> Spheres of influence can be found everywhere. The first object of the Theosophical Society is philanthropy. The true Theosophist is a philanthropist, who "Not for himself but for the world he lives." This, and philosophy, the right comprehension of life and its mysteries, will give the "necessary basis" and show the right path to pursue. Yet the best "sphere of influence" for the applicant is now in [his own land].

The reference to *a basis* and *a sphere of influence* is to the idea of those who held that a scientific or at least a very long preparation to get a basis and a sphere for work was needed first. But the answer shows the Adept as not agreeing, and as pointing out the way to work along the line of the heart doctrine. And some of the fuller notes annexed to the copy of this letter sent at the same time to others read:

> My reference to "philanthropy" was meant in its broadest sense, and to draw attention to the absolute need of the "doctrine of the heart" as opposed to that which is merely "of the eye." And before, I have written that our Society is not a mere intellectual school for occultism, and those greater than we have said that he who thinks the task of working for others too hard had better not undertake it. The moral and spiritual sufferings of the world are more important and need help and cure more than science needs aid from us in any field of discovery. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."—K. H.

After seventeen years of work it is now time that the whole Society should pay a little more attention to the words of those Masters of wisdom who have thus indicated the road, and these are the "original lines" traced out and meant to be followed. All those who do not follow them are those who feel dissatisfied with our work, and those who try to go upon these lines are those who feel and know that help is always given to the sincere Theosophist who ever tries not only to understand the philosophy but also to make it forceful for the proving and the exemplifying of the doctrine and object of Universal Brotherhood.

ONE OF THE RECIPIENTS

THE THRALDOM OF SUPERSTITION

Students of Theosophy have a duty to themselves in regard to their superstitions. Many of these influence them unconsciously to themselves. Intellectual recognition of the bane of superstition is one thing; perception of it as manifested in others, another. But the perception and recognition of one's own superstitions is a very different matter. Most of the time most of the students are blissfully ignorant of their own limitations born of their own superstitions.

The next step is harder still. When one has seen the existence and activity of certain superstitions in oneself the exercise necessary for eliminating them seems most arduous. Out of self-pity, or whatnot, we even make the practice appear to ourselves more arduous than it actually is.

The world, our particular world, glamours us in numerous ways. The glamour of our false beliefs, our misleading notions, our limited or misunderstood knowledge, prompts us to see grey (if not white) in place of black. The machinations of the Personal Man are subtle, one powerful one being—"Tomorrow I must make myself ready for the battle." We postpone. An attitude born of lethargy, of Tamas, and "tomorrow" recedes. We fail to see that "procrastination is the thief of time."

Because a person acquires some knowledge of the basic teachings of Theosophy he does not become different from the mass of mankind. One aspect of the initial glamour of this early stage is substituting privilege for responsibility. Even an acquaintance with the great philosophy *does* make a difference between the student and the mass: But the perception of that difference is glamorous if it is coloured by the sense of superiority which counts it as a privilege. If it is valued by the student as a serious responsibility to himself first and to others in the next place, he has taken a right turn on the Path of Progress. The sense of responsibility born of a correct understanding, however partial, of the basic ideas of Brotherhood, Reincarnation, Karma, compels a man to look at himself. Self-examination points to (among many

other things) his own superstitions. No student has all the superstitions which are rampant in modern civilization, but he would do well to review himself in the light of the principal ones which flourish at the present hour.

Superstitions are generally attributed to religious beliefs and creedal credulities. But we have had a pitiful exhibition of superstition about race in Hitler's Germany. In him and in his followers that superstition became concentrated and even was foolishly considered a possession to be proud of, but others, individuals and nations, are not devoid of this superstition; for example: so many citizens of the U. S. A. against the Negroes, their co-citizens; those Parsis who air their "blue blood" superiority over Hindus and Muslims; Britishers who arrogate to themselves superiority over Indians; the Whites in Africa, and so on.

There are political superstitions and also social ones pertaining to customs, manners, etc. Class distinctions (of patricians and plebeians, nobles and common people, bourgeois and proletariat, Suvarnas and Harijans etc., etc.) represent such social superstitions.

Born in this age, we are naturally prone to suffer from its superstitions; and born in a particular geographical area we also suffer from its superstitions. Superstitions are *skandhaic* and belong to the personal man. The Inner Manasic Ego, being a pure Thinker, is not fettered by superstitions and the dogmatism and fanaticism born of them.

One of the principal superstitions which overtakes a new student-practitioner is related to this spiritual freedom of the real Man. He fancies that he has freed himself from all fetters of the personality and arrogates to himself the position of a free man who need not concern himself with the outer and lower distinctions of life. He is deluded into the notion that he has freed himself from religious superstitions, social customs, scientific shibboleths, and political *parti pris*.

The neophyte, to begin with, should not assume that he has freed himself from superstitions. Philosophic reflection would very soon point out that such an asumption is sheer presumption, for his personality will reveal unmistakable signs of transmutation of *skandhas* when such has been achieved. Better humbly to look for one's own pet superstitions, which have a way of hiding themselves from one's perception.

Impartial self-examination will not only uncover our superstitions but often point to the truth that we have but exchanged one set of superstitions for another. Thus, for example, the creedal and communal bias of our pre-Theosophical days manifests under cover of magnetic purity, and, instead of saying of another that he is a heathen, or an infidel or a *durvand*, we say of one of a different temperament or of one whom we do not like—"His magnetism is not pure." To an orthodox brahamana the bhangi is an untouchable. When the former comes to Theosophy he substitutes some brother in place of the bhangi—"He is so impure in magnetism." Just as the orthodox brahamana is blissfully ignorant that in some of his habits he is as dirty and impure as the bhangi, so the new student is blissfully ignorant that his own personal magnetism is impure, in spite of all the hot water and soap which he may use. We can multiply examples. Superstitions die hard. We need gallons of the waters of knowledge and tons of the soap of exercise before our *skandhas* become transmuted, and the personality stands free from the incubus of superstitions.

Theosophy convicts blind belief of so many sins that the student is on his guard against it and tries to rationalize his own beliefs, seeking justification in the philosophy. Between the ever-flowing River of the Wisdom-Religion and the colouring it takes on, branching off in side courses, there is a fundamental difference. Our bias in favour of the religion into which we were born is given up —not always for the True but for a substitute. Thus, love for religious ceremonialism transfers itself to so-called mystical rites.

Instead of proceeding from type to archetype, the student often goes from one to another type. This is akin to a politician's changing of his party. Again, the history of the Movement knows characters whose innate love for creedalism died hard: coming out of orthodox churchianity some passed on into creedal Buddhism; others, coming out of dogmatic "free-thought," passed on into caste-ridden sectarianism; and so on. Again, many

inoculated with Spiritism, contacting Theosophy, continued—of course themselves unaware—with spook-ism, astralism and even necromancy.

Socially, the truth of the teaching of Reincarnation that in the evolutionary stream differences do exist was twisted by some to classify members in the Theosophical Brotherhood into aristocratic souls and others. Or, suiting their prejudices to the teaching about different classes of *pitris* now struggling in the human kingdom, they spoke of themselves as first-class and of others as second-class *pitris*. On the other hand, others of the same Theosophical Brotherhood impressed by political slogans about what H. P. B. called "the insane dreams of socialism and of communism," twisted the teaching of all men being brothers into that of all men being equal, as if the process of Reincarnation were absent! All men *are* brothers but they are different in bodily sensitivity and strength, in moral character and refinement, in mental stamina and depth of insight.

Again, there are superstitions of the men of science, especially those of the medical and borderland sciences, to which people fall prey.

We have superstitions about our bodily health, so intimately related to our bodily habits. Our psychological attitude reacts physiologically. To be nervous about bodily well-being is a superstition and is as wrong as carelessness and non-attention to it. It is our duty to be well, and fear is corrosive to health.

To have a defiant or a nonchalant attitude to health is "tempting Karma." To run to the doctor for every casual ache, especially when we have not thoughtfully planned our menus, our hours of labour and refreshment, is to be superstitious. Equally wrong are neglect to take note of pain—Nature's warning—and trying to do without medical assistance when one does not possess adequate knowledge to deal with that pain. Superstition once again!

Besides these two superstitions about the body, there are those about medical science. Every new nostrum or fad suggested by experimenters and exploiters is accepted by many as possessing healing power. How many of us fall prey to the doctors who are themselves infected with superstitions! Another instance of exchanging the object of our superstition. Once we believed blindly in the priest, now we believe in the doctor.

We can go on writing in this vein but what is said above ought to serve our purpose. That purpose is, to encourage each neophyte to face his own superstitions—not troubling himself with those of others. And if he starts with an examination of the contents of his own mind and its inclinations, soon will he see their ramifications in his sensorium. A sincere attempt to remedy mind-superstitions will remake our whole personality.

Blind belief in one's own self is a superstition when it is mistaken for confidence in the Inner Ruler. The archetypal superstition (if such a designation may be applied to so gross an imponderable) is one's own superstition about the nature and qualities of one's own personality. To know one's lower self is very difficult; the only knowledge more difficult is that about the Divinity which we are—the Star whose ray we are.

It is said that "Self-Knowledge is of loving deeds the child." Our unselfish deeds refine our lower nature and make possible the acquiring of the Wisdom about the Higher Self. But our loving deeds themselves have to be done in the name of, and for, that Higher Self, whose Light is described in our Theosophical philosophy. To begin with, we must learn to perform loving deeds, each time eliminating the personal element therefrom. If we are heedful, soon will we learn the art of loving deeds done for and as the Self. This is the Death of Superstition.

Men differ from beasts in their capacity for understanding that other beings have feelings as well as they. This understanding is developed in children during their earliest years when they are taught to be kind to animals and to one another and to other people. It is by extending such teaching to include all humanity that we shall lay the foundation for one world.

JOY ELMER MORGAN

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